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MR. FLINT AND "A SERIOUS GENTLEMAN"

SIR:

I appeal to you in behalf of Mr. Flint.

In *The Founding of Main Street* (first paper) appearing in a recent number of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, poor Mr. Flint is carelessly charged with the literary absurdities pronounced by a certain "serious gentleman" who discussed literary subjects with that ardent critic Mrs. Trollope. To quote your contributor: "Mrs. Trollope describes an evening with an American scholar, a Mr. Flint. He was, also, the lady observes, what is called in America a serious gentleman," etc. Then follow the literary observations of the serious one, which Mrs. Trollope criticises to her heart's content.

But the "serious gentleman" and Mr. Flint were totally different persons; and that is made specially plain in the original narrative.

The "serious gentleman" is introduced in these words: "On one occasion, *but not at the house of Mr. Flint*, I passed an evening in company with a gentleman said to be a scholar and a man of reading. He was also *what is called a serious gentleman*, and he appeared to have pleasure in feeling that his claim to distinction was acknowledged in both capacities."

During her three years' sojourn in this country, almost everybody and everything American called forth the petulant criticisms of the acidulous Mrs. Trollope. But Mr. Flint—Oh, rare Mr. Flint! he was the one glowing exception. He was the white haired boy. She actually found something in him to commend, in spite of the unpleasant circumstance that he was really an American. Nay, she was at considerable pains to set him apart from the common herd, and point out and proclaim his superior accomplishments. It seems like the irony of fate that, after taking such unusual care to immortalize Mr. Flint as the bright and particular object of her approval, his identity should now be confused with that of the solemn numskull whose literary vagaries she so heartily condemned.

Mr. Flint deserves a monument and fame, rather than misrepresentation and obscurity.

BELLE DIETRICH BYRNE.

Bismarck, N. D.

BATHTUB AND GARBAGE CAN

SIR:

I cannot quite follow Mr. Allen West Shaw's objections to my objection to the Garbage Can, so used, or misused, in our long-suffering country. Surely, in one short article he could not expect me to give statistics of every city, every town, every village that forms a part of this "heterogeneous mass". But had he done me the honor to read to the end of my article he would have discovered that I do not uphold all "the national habits" of the people in the countries of Europe. On the contrary, I deplore our "undesirable aliens who add their foreign methods of untidiness to our own," and refer to unfortunate customs in

Italian villages and horrors of filth in South European Ghettos. But I point out that when these aliens become American citizens, they think they have the right to inflict their home methods upon us and are not disillusioned by our authorities.

I have traveled far and wide in Europe, living on that side of the Atlantic for over thirty years, and never anywhere have I seen such slovenliness as we allow in our parks, in our principal streets, at our own particular doorsteps. We take our bathtub as the symbol of cleanliness, and so little understand cleanliness itself that the garbage everywhere in evidence is no offense. We are like our doughboys who in France shrank from the manure heap at the peasant's door and at home are sublimely unconscious of the garbage can at their own. It is high time for us to learn that "cleanliness and sanitation" begin and end not in the private bathtub, but really in the town or countryside we all share in common.

ELIZABETH ROBINS PENNELL.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

THE RIGHT OF CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

SIR:

I am interested in the controversy over the *Principles of Prohibition*, in which the Rev. Mr. McKim challenges the XVIII Amendment. There is a rather interesting political principle involved in that challenge that uncovers the foundation principles on which our government rests, to-wit: The right of the people to place that kind of an amendment in the Constitution.

It is a well settled principle in our political science that sovereignty resides with the people. That is: they possess the power to make or to abrogate constitutions, but the power to amend may be limited by prior engagements. THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW cannot perform a more valuable and patriotic service than opening its pages to an authentic discussion of that very important question.

H. L. TRISLER.

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

[The interesting and important point raised by our correspondent was discussed with much detail and authority in the October number of THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, pp. 573-576.—THE EDITORS.]